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Mosses.

BY

M. F. BRIDGMAN, M.D.

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1877

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

Mosses,

BY

M. F. BRIDGMAN, M.D.

Fairest flow'rs,
Whilst summer lasts, and I live here,
. . . . . thou shalt not lack;
The pale primrose; . . . . . .
. . . . . the azured hare-bell;
The leaf of eglantine; bring thee all this;
Yea, and furr'd moss besides, when flow'rs are none.

SHAKESPEARE: Cymbeline; Act. IV.

WOMAN.

What affair drives thee
Through the heat of the day,
Along this dusty road?
Bring'st thou wares from the town,
For the country round?

WANDERER.

No wares bring I from the town:
The evening 's growing cooler.
Show me to the spring
From which thou drinkest.

WOMAN.

This way, up the rocky path!
Thou go first. Through the bushes
Goes the path by the cottage
Where I live,
To the spring
From which I drink.

GŒTHE.

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By M. F. Bridgman.

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Mosses.

. . . . He lay along
Under an oak: . . . . . .
. . whose boughs were moss'd with age.

SHAKSPEARE.

And naught was green upon the oak,
But moss and rarest mistletoe.

COLERIDGE, *Christabel.*

Back the covert dim, ...
And the . . ground, ...
Carpet-smooth with grass and moss.

MRS. BROWNING, *The Lost Bower.*

And the ivy, ...
Was inwrought with eglantine,
And the wild hop, ...
And the large-leaved columbine.

MRS. BROWNING, *The Lost Bower.*

AT THE COTTAGE.

There the rose unveiled her beauty,
And each delicate bud of the season
Came in turn to bloom and perish.
But first of all the violet, with an eye
Blue as the midnight heavens, the frail snowdrop
Born of the breath of winter, and on his brow
Fixed, like a pale and solitary star;
The languid hyacinth, ...
And daisy, ...
Lilacks and flowering limes, and scented thorns.

CORNWALL.

THIS afternoon, the autumn winds are silent:
The landscape sleeps, — the sky is calm and mellow;
And the mild air is full of golden sunshine.

At length, has come the dreamy, sere October:
The southwest sun hangs low above the orchard,
And a soft haze fills all the quiet valley.

A mile away, the peaceful river glistens,
While through the elm-tree, gleams the distant village,
And like a shaft of fire, above it, shines the church-spire.

The woodbine listless droops about the window:
In the lone yard the leaves drop from the maples:
And clear against the sky, stands the bare locust.

As in my room I sit, musing upon the Autumn,
Through the half-open door, in yonder chamber,
I hear a voice, in a sweet, clear tone, singing:

The landscape no longer is smiling,
  The trees in the woodland are sere;
The willow-leaves swim in the brook,
  By the door the shrill cricket I hear.

The lily blows not in the meadow,
  Now all the June roses are dead;
The sparrows and kinglets have come,
  But the thrush and the swallow have fled.

But the thrush will come back and the swallow,
  When the sun shall have melted the snows;
To the meadow, the lily return,
  To the garden next season, the rose.

The Spring to man's life twice comes not,
  Not twice to its landscape its flush;
Blooms the rose or the lily but once,
  But once come the swallow and thrush!

Against the window gleams the purple woodbine:
Beyond the river, sleep the sombre hemlocks,
The distant valley, and the silent hamlet.

Above me, in the still copse, glow the maples:
White on the hazy hills, and bare the birches,
While scarlet burns the oak among the pine-trees.

YOUTH AND AGE.

I.

FAR down the fields, between the pasture-slopes,
Where in the sunshine basks the valley,—roams
A youth with handsome face and flaxen hair,
Half-hidden in the thick-grown meadow grass.

Anon he stops to pluck the buttercups,
The dandelions scattered o'er the mead,
Or gazes at his image in the stream,
Between the sedges growing on its bank.

The flag nods often in the reedy fen,
The rushes glisten in the morning sun,
The willow o'er the streamlet lightly sways,
And in the moist soil waves the celandine.

The robin trills his lay from yonder ash,
The bobolink is singing o'er the mead ;
The bluebird answers to the blackbird's note,
And in the spice-bush pipes the water-thrush.

The purple-marten in the oozy swamp,
Splashes the water of the shallow pool ;
The swallow in the rivulet dips its wing,
While in the hazel sings the meadow-lark.

Sometimes he turns to chase the butterflies,
And pauses oft to watch the summer clouds,
Or in the shadow of the alders sits,
And listens to the babble of the brook.

The breeze tosts to and fro his flaxen locks,
And radiant in the meadow is his face,
And pleasant looks it in the glassy stream,
From out the sedges reaching to his chin.

Homeward, at length, he hies, through the rank grass,
Nor dreams of landscapes broadening miles beyond :
Heaven is contained in that one patch of sky,
And the round world is bounded by two hills.

Morn passes, and the noon, and wanes the day.
The sun drops down behind the neighboring wood,
While evening casts its shadow o'er the vale,
And the field-sparrow chants its vesper-hymn.

II.

The old man in his arm-chair by the open window sits,
And feels upon his cheek the soft, warm air of May,
and says:

"Fair looks yon meadow, with its winding stream and
stately elms;
And pleasant yonder slope; the wood that crowns the
eastern hill.

By the front door, the morning-glory opens to the morn:
The woodbine-leaves are green; the balm-of-gilead by
the wall.

White gleam the snow-balls in the yard ; the lilacs scent
the air ;
And sweet the perfume of the orchard-trees, beyond the
road.

The locust now puts forth its leaves ; and blooms the
pear-tree near ;
The cherry by the garden-gate ; the chestnut on the
lawn.

And pleasant are the notes of birds that come with
these bright days :
Yonder, I hear the bobolink ; hard by, the oriole.

But vanished days do not return, nor last year's flowers
with May,
Nor blooms the life of man again, when once its Spring
has flown.

Yet lingers here the sapless stalk in the sere, frosty
fields.
To-day, it dryly rustles in the mournful autumn
wind ! "

III.

Long since, it went, the flush from all the landscape,
And with it went the long, bright days of Summer.
At this calm evening, in the sere October,
Clear glows the sun along the western hillside,
And on the streamlet, in the silent meadow,
Sleeps the soft sunshine of the golden sunset.
Bare are the trees, in yonder copse of maples,
That stand midway the slope below the woodland,
Through which the pleasant autumn-sun is shining.
And in the copse, about a lonely headstone,
Are thickly strown the scarlet leaves and yellow.

UNDER THE WILLOW.

A RUSTIC fence upon the slope,
Not far beyond the orchard-trees,
Surrounds a single grassy mound:
Within it gleams a pale-white stone.

In the rich soil the clover blooms,
The eglantine nods o'er the mound,
The willow by the headstone droops,
And moss half hides the simple name.

The mowers in the meadow swing
Their sharp scythes yonder, keeping time,
While through the orchard comes the talk
Of laborers in the corn below.

Leaning against the fence hard by
The grassy mound and headstone white,
While in the south wind gently wave
The willow-tree and eglantine ;

While o'er the fence the blackberry-bush
Bends low with ripening clusters near,
Oft in the south wind lightly sways,
And shifts its shadow in the sun ;

Long has stood one in thoughtful mood,
Musing upon the simple name,
Where quiver through the willow-leaves,
The sunbeams in the dreamy shade.

"How many years have flown," he said,
"Since he and I, one summer day,
Walked this same field, and sat beneath
The orchard-trees on yonder slope!

When long we talked of summers gone,
And long of summers yet to be,
As closer drew my heart to him,
And oft was mingled soul with soul!

To-day, you walk in other fields,
In far-off climes, O friend of yore!
Yet in my thought, the memory lives,
Which hallows all this scene to me.

And now you count the golden hours,
Where all that's fair, and pure, and bright,
Flows through that life, which oft I think
Must sometimes own our friendship here!"

The mowers in the meadow swing
Their sharp scythes yonder, keeping time;
And through the orchard-trees is heard
The talk of laborers in the corn.

The blackberry-bush bends o'er the fence,
With dark-red clusters in the leaves,
Oft in the south wind lightly sways,
And shifts its shadow in the sun.

The light gleams on the mossy stone,
And sleeps upon the grassy mound:
While near it droops the willow-tree,
And o'er it nods the eglantine!

ONE DAY.

O HAPPY summer valley!
I bare my forehead to the wind that kisses
With its soft lips the hills, and thy fair bosom,
While in the sunny orchard,
I hear the oriole singing,
As on the grass I lie among the hazels.

Clear bends the sky above me,
As sinks the round sun towards the western woodland,
And near, upon the smooth and sloping greensward,
Sleeps the warm, summer sunshine,
That through the drooping branches,
Steals down between the green leaves waving o'er me.

Calm lies the level meadow:
Among the elm-trees gleams the peaceful river,
And hazy in the distance is the hamlet,
The silent hills and woodland,
While through the low-topped birches
I see the small pond glow among the willows.

Beyond, I see the cottage,
Half-hidden by yon clump of thick-leaved maples,
Where one short year ago, the sweetest flower
That bloomed in all the valley,
Drooped on its stalk and faded,
Ere on the ground were strown the first June roses.

One day, — one day in Summer
I well recall, — when on the slope below me,
We sat beneath the shadow of the pine-trees,
As slept the golden sunshine
On all the vale below us,
And the smooth grass-land of the upland pasture:

As near us, in the ash-tree,
The robin sang, — while oft the vesper-sparrow
We heard in yonder field, — and in the valley,
Where softly slept the landscape
Between the poplars glistened
The distant streamlet and the silent village.

One day, — but seven short seasons
Have come and gone since then, — I oft recall it
In these bright hours, — a day that thrice is hallowed,
And like a lingering perfume,
Within a room deserted,
Scents all my memory with its blessed fragrance.

O day! breathe softly o'er her,
And gently stir the grass upon her bosom,
The rose but lately planted, and the hyacinth,
On the fresh earth above her,
Whose thought to me is sweeter
Than Spring's fresh breath, or sweetest flower of Summer!

SEA-WEED.

WE sat that evening in the ancient farm-house,
And looked anon across the level meadow,
Which the soft sunset bathed with golden sunshine.

And in the pauses of our talk, our faces
Turned long and often to the narrow window,
Where through the small panes shone the purple wood-
bine.

The oaks upon the lawn burned in the pine-trees,
And brown was all the meadow-land beyond us,
While by the door-way, gleamed the yellow maple.

Upon the long and sandy beach below us,
We heard the ceaseless murmur of the ocean,
The deep, low music of its solemn anthem.

Eastward, we saw beyond the craggy headland,
Where darkly rose the rock above the waters,
A speck against the sky,— the distant light-house.

And in the distance, as our eyes turned seaward,
Beheld three white sails on the clear horizon,
And over them, the pale moon, at its quarter.

Often we turned the leaves of memory over,
As to and fro swayed the dark, purple woodbine,
In the chill autumn air,— beside the casement.

And when the sun went down behind the woodland,
And faded from our sight the far-off hamlet,
While dim the western lowland lay in shadow,—

As loomed the hills against the dark horizon,
And all the surface of the sombre landscape
Lay vague, at length, in our imperfect vision,—

Long talked we,— and revived our ancient friendship,—
As glowed the Past, from out its half-dead ashes,
While in the fire-place burned the dying embers.

And on the long and sandy beach below us,
We heard the deep, low murmur of the ocean,
As o'er it hung the red moon, at its quarter.

IN THE COPSE.

"Ah, folly," in mimic cadence answered James —
"Ah, folly, for it lies so far away.
Not in our time, nor in our children's time,
'Tis like the second world to us that live,
'T were all as well to fix our hopes on Heaven
As on this vision of the golden year."

With that, he struck his staff against the rocks
And broke it, — James, — you know him, old, but full
Of force and choler, and firm upon his feet,
And like an oaken stock in winter woods,
O'erflourished with the hoary clematis:
Then added, all in heat:

"What stuff is this?
Old writers pushed the happy season back —
The more fools they, — we forward: dreamers both:
You most, that in an age, when every hour
Must sweat her sixty minutes to the death,
Live on, God love us, as if the seedsman, rapt
Upon the teeming harvest, should not dip
His hand into the bag; but well I know
That unto him who works, and feels he works,
This same grand year is ever at the doors."

TENNYSON: *The Golden Year.*

WE sat together in the copse,
Whose shadow had along the quiet hillside crept,
And talked near half the July afternoon away,
My old-time college friend and I.

And since, that day has been to me
Like some rare dream which we recall when sleep is past,—
Which brightens soft o'er Memory's fields, as when the sun
At evening, gilds a distant scene.

There sat my old-time friend and I.
The breeze of summer softly fanned his brow and mine,—
While from the level meadow, where the lazy stream
Flowed southward through the alders green,

The bobolink sent up its note.
There the great elms their shadows cast along the ground,
And the thick grass already had begun to wave,
And in it bloom the meadow-sweet.

In the rich grass-land on the slope,
The dandelions nodded to the warm, south wind,
And all the field was pied with buttercups,
And clover-blossoms, white and red.

Often, across the vale we looked.
The pleasant hillside in the sunshine lay,—and green
Upon the summit all the silent woodland glowed,
Embossed against the peaceful sky.

Below, the large, square farm-house slept
In the cool shadow of the chestnuts at our feet:
Beyond, we saw the shimmer of the winding brook,
The small spire of the distant vill.

Oft in the copse we turned the leaves
Of memory o'er, — recalled the days when he and I
Were undergraduates at Alton Green, — and roamed
The pleasant fields of ancient lore.

O, oft we touched familiar themes:
On much the syren, Hope, had promised us at morn,—
How half the blossoms of our life are nipt with frost,—
Or oft we find but Dead-Sea fruit.

"Well I recall," he said, "the days
When over Æschylus we pored, so long ago,
Together, — with Demosthenes made common cause,
Harangued with him in Attic Greek.

When Æschines we daily conned,
At night, exchanged our sleep for his rare eloquence, —
Trod the Athenian stage with Aristophanes,—
With Homer, made the siege of Troy.

With Plato, oft outwatched the moon,
And held high converse with those philosophic friends,
Who keep him company, — and thought the hours too
short,
While listening to the words they spoke.

Life's prizes, o'er and o'er, we won:
I was to choose the Law, — and was to reach, at length,
Distinction at the Bar, — perhaps, try Politics, —
Climb high in Party, — high in State.

You was to sail in calmer seas, —
And deep in Schelling, Stewart, Hamilton, and Kant,
Was a professorship to win, — when you came back
From Heidelberg or Gottingen, —

And from your academic chair,
Read lectures in philosophy to college forms, —
Expound your German metaphysics and your Scotch,
To clever Junior, Senior, Soph.

The years went by: erelong our schemes
Became as mythical as e 'er the siege of Troy:
Europe, to you, has since been far-off as Cathay, —
You missed, — I think, — your college-chair.

And I? My laurels at the Bar,
You know, are all unwon; I never tried the Law;
For Politics, of every school, I 've little cared,—
Nor am I known in caucus halls.

Stewart and Hamilton and Kant,
You 've long since laid beside my Blackstone and my Kent:
And if you never lecture now to college forms,
You please your country parish well.

And on my hundred-acre farm,
I manage very well to make the two ends meet:
That cornfield yonder, is not bad, — I rather like
My upland crop of winter rye."

"Ah! our horizon evermore
Is bounded by another which we cannot see,"
I said: "our forecast of the Future cannot show
What realms stretch on beyond our eyes!

And so, if Hope has played us false,
If most her promises have been but empty lies,
Wisdom, though late, has come to us with ample stores,
And makes, at morn, no haste to go.

And in the humbler paths we 've trod,
We 've found what Law, Philosophy, or Politics
Could never give, — in common deeds far more than Fame,—
And richer harvests than we dreamed !."

Across the smooth, green meadow-land,
The shadow of the elms stretched towards the eastern hill:
The sun, behind us, shining down the western slope,
Touched all the maple copse with fire.

THE NIGHT-WIND.

How sweet
To watch the struggling softness! It allays
The beating tempest of my thoughts, and flows
Like the nepenthe of elysian through me.

Hillhouse.

THOU pine-tree, that oft wavest thy dark branches,
In the soft starlight of this summer twilight,
As through thee steals the cool breeze from the valley,

Within the moonless air, thy boughs are sombre,
And where I lie, below yon clump of hazels,
Sleeps thy deep shadow on the summer greensward.

But oft I catch faint glimpses through thy branches,
Of the clear stars, in the calm sky above me,
And the pure depths of the celestial spaces,—

While near me, in the twilight, in thy dark top,
Like solemn whispers, from mysterious voices,
I hear the soft, low murmur of the night-wind.

And in the distance, I behold the faint lights,
Through the dim night-air, in the silent valley,
The faint lights of the village, far below me,—

While eastward, through the deepening August shadows,
Against the blue sky, on the low horizon,
I see the distant woodland, far beyond me.

O night-wind! softly sighing in the silence
Above me, through the long and dusky branches,
At this lone hour, I listen to thy music,

And in my spirit hear thy ceaseless anthem,
As solemnly within my soul's deep chambers,
Whispers thy voice, and darkly waves the pine-tree!

A SHADOW.

Hard by yon streamlet she sits, where the sunbeams are
falling soft o'er her.
Gently the summer breezes are kissing her cheeks and
her forehead.
Lies in her lap the small volume a moment ago she was
reading.
Slowly, among the smooth pebbles, the streamlet glides
on in its channel,
Making, meanwhile, as it glides o'er the stones, a mon-
otonous murmur.
Pipes in the maple the jay, and the robin sings blithe
in the ash-tree,
While the lone blackbird is singing hard by, in the green
upland-pasture.
Intent she looks, musing, upon the clear brooklet below
her,

As o'er her young features, steals a half-sad expression.
Sad are the thoughts that the story she read in the volume awakens,
A tale, tender and true,—how a youth loved a beautiful maiden,
Long ago, in a country afar, by the blue-rolling Danube.
Pure was their love for each other, and long kept they their affection.
True to each were they, when at length, in the soft, pleasant spring-time,
At the small hamlet, the priest was at length, in the church, to unite them.
Months come and go,—and erelong comes the pleasant and beautiful spring-time.
But, from the church, on the same day that was set for their nuptials,
Slowly the maiden they bore to the small, green church-yard, hard by it,
Of amaranths, wove they her bridal-wreath then, and rosemary.
Sad are the thoughts that the story she read in the volume awakens;
Pipes in the maple the jay, and the robin sings blithe in the ash-tree,
While the lone blackbird is singing hard by, in the green upland-pasture.

ON LOOKING AT THE PORTRAIT OF BURNS, ON HIS HUNDRED AND EIGHTEENTH BIRTHDAY.

WHERE winds the Doon, and each year blooms the heather,
Or waves upon the sunny rig the thistle,
Or caller gowans deck the glen each season,

The Spring its soft flush brings to all the landscape,
And smile on all its braes the skies of Summer,
And mellow Autumn shines on fell and dingle.

Oft as the morning gilds the burn and upland,
Or Doon, at mid-day, in the wicker shimmers,
And nightly sleeps the moon upon its bosom,—

Oft as is heard amidst the yellow barley,
Or ripe and wavy grain within the rye-field,
The talk of cantie reapers on the hillside;—

Or lads and lassies gather at the hamlet,
Or dance at eve upon the leesome greensward,
Or in the gloamin chat beside the hawthorn,—

Or often as the cotter sits at even
By the warm hearth before the lighted ingle,
Or carlin croons her song beside the chimlie,—

Or by the fire-place sits the daintie guidwife,
Or caddies clatter idly at the ale-house,
While oft the tale goes round, and oft the ditty,—

How does each rustic scene, each simple pleasure,
The name of Burns, in every thought, awaken,
And take fresh charms from Scotia's darling poet!

His name along the winding Doon is murmured,
By every breeze that whispers through the dingle,
Or stirs the grass beside each Scottish burnie.

By every wind that sways the summer thistle,
Or in the warm glen waves the caller gowans,
Or on the hillside curls the yellow barley.

By every lad and lassie at the hamlet,
In every dance upon the leesome greensward,
In every cottage by the lighted ingle!

Burn, burnie, water, a rivulet.
Brae, a bank, a declivity.
Caller, fresh.
Clatter, to tell little, idle stories.
Cantie, cheerful, merry.
Cotter, the inhabitant of a cottage.
Carlin, a stout, old woman.
Chimlie, a fire-place, a fire-grate.
Caddie, a young fellow.
Dingle, a dale.
Dantie, agreeable, pleasant.
Fell, a level field on the side or top of a hill.
Gowans, daisy, dandelion, hawkweed etc.
Gloamin, the twilight.
Guidwife, the mistress of a house.
Heather, the heath, a plant of the genus Erica.
Ingle, a fire-place.
Lassie, a young woman,—a girl,—applied particularly to a country girl.
Leesome, pleasant.
Rig, a ridge.
Shimmer, to gleam, to glisten.
Wicker, the willow.

IN THE LAP OF EARTH.

Here rests his head upon the lap of earth.

Gray's Elegy in a Country Churchyard: THE EPITAPH.

Yet once more, O ye laurels, and once more
Ye myrtles brown, and ivy never sere,
I come to pluck your berries.

MILTON: *Lycidas.*

HARD by the wide and dusty street of the village,
By a rude wall fenced in, is the enclosure,—
A small, square plot of ground,—the village churchyard.

And near it stands the ancient church,—whose windows,
On one side, from the high and narrow casements,
O'erlook it with their small panes,—dark and sombre.

And there the grass, each year, grows rank within it,
About it can be seen thick clumps of shrubbery,
And droops a willow by a single headstone.

Within the spot, luxuriant grows the bramble,
Whose berries, dark and red, beside the low wall,
Ripen among the green leaves, every season.

Upon the mounds, you often see the eglantine,
And here and there a sad, low shrub of hemlock,
A stunted fir, or half a dozen sumachs.

Among the shrubbery, a scattered cypress,
A rose-bush there, which blossoms late each Summer,
The bindweed,—honeysuckle, — and the ivy.

There oft, in early Spring, you see the primrose,
And close beside it, every May, the violet,
In autumn days, the aster and the cinquefoil.

Each Autumn, o'er the wall, a wrinkled grapevine,—
About its edge, a few blue stems of raspberry,
And the pale-yellow leaves of the witch-hazel.

In late October, berries of viburnum,
Among the underbrush, a golden-rod,
And elder-berries on each side the gateway.

Beside a mound, within the ancient churchyard,
A woman kneels, in the mild autumn twilight,
And through the silence, steal, at length, these accents ;

"Green be thy lowly mound, through every season,
And each year, on thy green grave, spring the crocus,
Ever its leaves about thee, twine the ivy :

Upon it, blossom, every Spring, the primrose,
And close beside it, every May, the violet,
Each Autumn, flower the cinquefoil, and the aster."

BELOW THE WOODLAND.

Bring an oath most sylvan, . . .
And upon it swear me, ...
By the wind-bells swinging slowly,
Their mute curfews, ...
By the advent of the snow-drop—by the rosemary and the rue.

MRS. BROWNING, *The Lost Bower.*

BELOW a honeysuckle bank,
They sat within the pleasant shade,
And through the branches of the trees,
Glowed the warm sky above the hill,
While a soft sunbeam
Quivered upon the silent streamlet at their feet.

Over the eastern hill-top hung.
Low o'er the wood, the crescent moon,
And often on the steep, cool slope,
They heard the clear note and serene,
From the dim forest,
Which the lone hermit-thrush from its deep bosom sent.

How clear it fell upon their ears !
Ethereal and melodious,
Like the pure strain of some rich chant
From distant, dim, cathedral aisles,
On some still Sabbath,
Filling the sense with joy, the soul with holy calm.

Within an ancient poplar-tree,
The yellow-hammer lingered near,
And from the fastness of the hill,
Sounded the veery's mellow flute
High up, above them,
While far away, anon, they heard the cuckoo's note.

Lightly the breeze that kissed the vale,
Stirred the green leaves above their heads,
And near them, on the woody ridge,
Made a soft murmur in the pine,—
And often nodded
The willow to the alder o'er the mossy stream.

"Next week," she said, "so soon, you sail!
How wide the distance and the time
That will divide your path and mine!
That year I 'll think a whole decade,
While at the farm-house,
And you in that old German town upon the Rhine.

Autumn will bring the mellow days,
And strip the woodland branches bare,—
The Winter go, — another Spring
Flush all the fields in yonder vale,—
Ere from the Rhineland
You will return,—how many weary months to me!"

"One week," he said, "the ship leaves port,
And sailing toward the rising sun,
Will make its voyage o'er the main:
The Winter bring again the Spring:
The laggard seasons
At length will go:—the thrush return to yonder wood.

But in the heart of Europe, mine
Will constant beat, and know no change:
For you, as steadfast keep its faith,
In the Old World, as in the New:
Let the winds waft me
Where'er they will:—still Love will bring me back to you."

The Autumn came with golden days:
The Winter went,—another Spring
Flushed the warm hill and all the vale.
The Summer brought again the rose,—
The spirea nodded
In the rich meadow,—and the aster by the road.

Upon the honeysuckle bank,
Within the shadow of a birch,
One summer day, below the wood,
A maiden sits, by yonder stream:
A sunbeam quivers
Upon the little, silent eddy at her feet.

Deep in the woodland sleeps the shade,
Where sits and sings the lonely thrush,
While in the fastness of the hill,
Is heard the veery's mellow flute:
The yellow-hammer
Sits in the sugar-bush,—the jay pipes in the ash.

The ship has sailed, O, long ago,
And made its voyage o'er the main:
The ship, O, long ago, returned,
But never he,—from yonder Rhine.
All lands,—all seasons,—
Where'er the round sun shines, thou hast for thine,
O Love!

IN THE OLD CHURCH-TOWER.

The bell hangs in the low church-tower, and at the curfew,
In the small hamlet, ringeth the stout old sexton, each season,
And as the great bell swings heavily to and fro in the belfry,
Over the village peal its loud tones, like a deep, solemn anthem.
Hard by, an ancient wall, often o'errun with the bramble,
With the wild grapevine and ivy, surrounds the small village churchyard,
Where through the shrubbery, each season, shine the white tombstones.

Dark by the street, but a rod from the church, is the high and wide gateway,
And a small path from it runs, overgrown with the soft, rich greensward,
Between the low mounds, here and there, in the enclosure.
Often within it, the tombstones lean from their upright position,—
On the more ancient ones, the names are hidden by lichens.
Often in Spring and Summer, the robin sings there in the sumach.
Often the blackbird is heard, as he sits there and sings in the bramble.
Buildeth there, each season, the swallow its nest in the belfry,
While o'er the mounds daily creeps the shadow of the sharp church-spire.
Old is the sexton, and fat, but he pulleth the bell-rope right strongly,
And as the great bell heavily swings to and fro, in the church-tower,
Over the village peal its loud tones, like a deep, solemn anthem.
It is a day in mid-summer,— and slowly there moves through the gateway,

A dark procession, — while over the hamlet low shineth
The large, round sun, touching with golden light all the church-spire.
Gently they lay in the earth there, a maiden of but sixteen summers.
Fair is her brow, and her cheek as the lily, pale-white, in the soft air.
Gently they lay her to rest, in the quiet earth, by the sumach,
Which o'er the grave, that was made there so lately, casts its small shadow.
Slowly the dark procession windeth from out the green church-yard.
Heavily closes the gate, when the church-yard is silent and empty,
While o'er the tombstones and mounds, creepeth the soft evening shadows.
Old is the sexton and fat, but he pulleth the bell-rope right strongly,
And as the great bell heavily swings to and fro, in the church-tower,
Over the village, peal its loud tones, like a deep, solemn anthem.

BEYOND THE MEADOW.

MILD shone the sun upon the summer landscape,
And warm below us lay the silent valley,
While here and there among the sleepy willows,
We saw the shimmer of the winding river,
As in the shadow of the maple,
We sat together on the grass-land,
And in the forest,
Dim behind us,
We heard the clear note
Of the wood-thrush.

Beyond us, slept the shadows of the elm-trees,
Along the vale,—as o'er the clear horizon
The sun hung large and round above the woodland,
And touched the gentle slope with softest sunshine.
And as we looked across the meadow,
We dimly saw the quiet village
Among the lindens,
And low above them,
In the warm sunlight,
The village church-spire.

O, long we talked, as near us, through the ashes.
We sat and gazed upon the distant lowland,
The hill beyond us, and the silent hamlet,
As on us breathed the gentle air of evening.
Along the level fields below us,
We heard the oriole and blackbird,
And in the spice-bush,
Not far above us,
In the high pasture,
The vesper-sparrow.

Oft with our eyes, we traced the winding streamlet,
As glowed the sunbeams on its glassy bosom,
And oft we caught faint glimpses of the church-spire,
That in the distance rose above the village.
And long we talked of vanished summers,
Of golden days, in far-off autumns,
As on the valley,
And all the upland,
Stole the calm twilight
Softly o'er us.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE TO MARGARET'S LAMENT.

It was left for modern scholars to wipe away the stain which, for so many hundred years, has rested upon the reputation of Sappho. The ode which she addressed to her brother, reproaching him wth his love for a courtesan, could never have been written by one who had been herself a courtesan. And the relation which existed between her and Alcæus, forms one of the immortal friendships of the world, — a beautiful episode of history. Alcæus himself gives testimony to her moral worth, and calls her "violet-crowned, pure, sweetly-smiling Sappho." Her poetry, if we may believe the voice of antiquity, was unrivalled for sweetness and purity, — a judgment certainly confirmed by the few verses which remain of her effusions. She composed a great number of odes, epigrams, elegies, and epithalamiums, and all her poems were upon love. The Greeks called her the "Tenth Muse," and thus crowned her with greener bays than any wreathed about the temples of Anacreon or Menander. Strabo looked upon her as a prodigy, and thought all other women inferior to her in writing poetry. Vossius says, that none of the Greek poets excelled her for sweetness of verse. The Mitylenians held her in such high esteem, that they stamped their coin with her image. And the Romans admired her genius so much, that they erected a statue of porphyry to her memory. But nothing remains of her

productions, save some fragments which the ancient Scholiasts have cited, — an ode to Venus in the Sapphic measure, — another ode yet more beautiful, descriptive of the emotions of love,—and some epigrams. She added a lyric measure to Greek versification, of great harmony, called after her own name, which Catullus and Horace afterwards successfully introduced into their Latin compositions. The fragment that has been preserved by Longinus, exhibits a beauty of conception which shines through Ambrose Phillips' pure English, like an antique gem:

Blest as the immortal gods is he,
The youth who fondly sits by thee,
And hears and sees thee all the while,
Softly speak, and sweetly smile.

'Twas this deprived my soul of rest,
And raised such torments in my breast;
Far while I gazed, in transport tost,
My breath was gone,—my voice was lost.

My bosom glowed,—the subtle flame
Ran quick through all my vital frame:
O'er my dim eyes a darkness hung;
My ears with hollow murmurs rung.

In dewy damps my limbs were chilled,—
My blood with gentle horrors thrilled:
My feeble pulse forgot to play,
I fainted, sunk, and died away.

Muller, in remarking upon this poem, says,—"In this, and even in stronger terms, the poetess expresses nothing more than a friendly attachment to a young girl, but which, from the extreme excitement of feeling, assumes all the tone of the most ardent passion."

I will only add, that I have made no attempt to translate any of her poems, but my aim has simply been, to give the reader some idea of the Sapphic measure, of which the first foot consisted of a trochee, the second of a spondee, the third of a dactyl, and the fourth and fifth of a trochee. It is only an attempt to introduce an ancient metre into English verse.

MARGARET'S LAMENT.

IN SAPPHIC MEASURE.

[*She sits by the open window in May, and looks out into the Garden.*]

Henry, return! long are the months since that day,
When, by yon stream parting, you left me, saying,
Absence could but deepen your love. The meadow
Blossoms no more. Everywhere missing you here,
What is the landscape to me? Where art thou now?
Spring comes, but you meet me no more. The orchard
Blooms not,—the tree where we sat, whispers only,

Henry, thy name,—whisper the sad leaves,—Henry!
Blossoms the rose now no more in the garden,
Blossoms no more in the yard now the lilac.
Lovely seems no longer the sycamore tree:
Now by my lone window, blooms not the snowball.
Yonder, in the meadow, I often wander,
Yonder, the stream where we sat when we parted,
Chants its low song, murmuring thy name sadly,
Thou art not here. Many the months since that day,
When by yon stream parting, you left me saying,
Absence could but deepen your love. Where art thou?

THE PORTRAIT.

BEFORE this portrait long I've stood,
And gazed upon this face, which instinct seems with life,
Which ne'er grows old, but keeps its beauty, year by year,
Beyond the flight and frost of Time.

It holds me by a magic spell:
The features wear the look of calm intelligence,
I read a half-sad meaning in the clear, deep eyes,
Too full, too deep for speech.

A sweet expression have the lips,
And the mild countenance, though handsome, thoughtful seems;
Scarcely across this brow, unfurrowed yet by care,
Have more than seventeen summers passed.

Gazing within these hazel orbs,
This countenance so like a pleasant day in Spain,
I look as on a fair perspective lengthening out
To distant, mellow skies beyond.

Or as one from a gentle hill
Looks on the windings of a silent, distant stream,
And catches, through the reaches of the landscape fair,
Its light and shade in fields below.

This face was painted long ago,
And once did grace the gallery in old Seville,
By Atanasio Boccanegra,—a rare
And famous artist in his day.

Artist and she whose young life looked
From out the depths of these half-sad and liquid eyes,
Who once had all the fresh, rare beauty painted here,
Have long gone back to common earth.

Two hundred years have they been dust.
The hand of him who painted this, laid down its brush
Within the last half of the seventeenth century.
At thirty, its rare skill forgot.

Fain would I know her history,
Who on this canvass greets me from the distant Past,
Who looks upon me with a pensive tenderness,
From out this carved and antique frame.

The book is shut: an unseen hand
Has to the volume fixed the clasp; yet one may read
What the old artist has revealed,—and seem to trace
The words upon its lettered page.

Here, as I study this young face,
All that the fair page of this countenance reveals,
Fancy doth conjure up the story of her life,
And links to thought a tender tale.

The shadow of a grief is there.
What was its cause I know not,—none may ever know.
It darkens those mild eyes, as some light, fleecy cloud
The bosom of a lake in June,

And as I musing gaze thereon,
I trust that face did never take a darker shade,
And the fair stream of that young life at length
flowed on.
In sunshine, till it reached the sea.

And wiser has it made my heart,
This portrait, that a living poem is to me,
That for a while has lifted my dull brain from care,
And filled an hour with dreamy thought.

And many heart-felt thanks I give,
O Atanasio Boccanegra,—to thee,
For this rare picture, all I 've dreamed this half-hour
gone,
Of this sweet face, and old Seville.

IN PEACE.

He sends his nepenthe of healing to all,
By a seneschal gray.

ARAMIS: *Resurgamus.*

O DAY, that in my memory is hallowed,
O by-gone day, that through the mists and shadows
Of twenty seasons, like a mild star shineth :

By the warm hill I sit below the orchard,
While the south wind breathes lightly on my forehead,
And smiles the fresh, soft scene from all the landscape.

Where art thou, who, by yonder bank of cowslips,
As sunk the fair, round sun behind the hill-top,
And all the air was genial with the spring-time :

As the soft breeze of evening wooed thy tresses,
And May, with warm lips, gently kissed thy pale cheek,
And sang the robin blithely in the beech-tree :

While half in shadow slept the level meadow,
And half the elms were bathed with softest sunshine,
And crept the streamlet through the distant valley :

As oft you talked of the long days in Summer,
Which soon would bring the wood-thrush to the forest,
And the song-sparrow to the upland pasture :

Didst sit beside me, in that far-off sunset,
O friend of yore ? The robin in the beech-tree
Sings near,—the slope is white with apple-blossoms :

And in the faint light of this soft spring evening,
I think how many suns have set and risen,
Since the first violet blossomed on thy bosom.

ABOVE THE VILL.

ONE far-off day I well recall.
And yet it seems scarce more to me than five brief years,
Since, from the green slope of this pleasant hill, I took
My farewell view of yonder vale.

There lies the village,—where the spire
Of yon small church o'erlooks the houses white and brown:
How quietly between the hills it sleeps today,
Lit by the setting autumn sun!

There runs the little straggling street,
Between the ancient elm-trees down the gentle slope:
I see, half-hidden by the shade, the narrow lawn,
A green spot in the dusty vill!

There stands the small, red hostelry,
Within the shadow of the ancient sycamore:
The sign glows in the sun,—hard by, the quiet porch
Looks as of yore on yonder way.

Beyond the hamlet winds the stream,
In the mild sunshine of the meadow-land below,—
While through the scattered alders gleams the shallow pond,
The low roof of the small, gray mill.

In the soft shadow oft I catch
Faint glimpses of the church-yard near the village green:
And through the willows, in the clear September light,
I see the snow-white tombstones shine.

Hard by, beside the still highway,
I see the white, square belfry of the wooden church:
How small it looks, above the smooth and level lawn,
Among the dark-green linden trees!

Between the houses oft I gaze,
Along the avenue half-hidden from my sight:
Deep lies the shade to-day within the sleepy vill,
And silent seems the empty street!

O landlord of the Holly Tree,
Who stood with plump, round figure, with your genial face,
And welcomed all who crossed the threshold of your inn,
With cheerful words, and pleasant smile,—

You stand no more in yonder porch,
Or in the bar-room of the ancient hostelry:
There your last pleasant story has at length been told,—
You 've stopped, long since, at Life's last Inn.

O master of the village school,
Who in yon small house swayed your sceptre, year by year:
The red house down the shady street, I see,—the school
Long since,—has been dismissed,—I know.

O village pastor, all men knew,
Who in the high and antique pulpit stood so oft:
You, in yon hamlet, watch no more your rustic flock,
Nor quit to-day the common fold.

O white-haired sexton,—who of yore,
So many summers plied your spade in yonder vale,—
You, in yon church-yard, joke no more with your friend
Death,
Nor break the fresh, rich greensward now.

And you, as year by year went by,
O miller, busy at your task, from morn to eve,
For you, the Autumn brings no more the yellow grain,
Each season, now, to yonder mill.

But as I look adown the street,
Or o'er the pleasant houses, sleeping in the vill,
Gleams o'er the Past a light, like yonder setting sun,
And mute lips speak in Fancy's ear!

HADRIAN'S ADDRESS TO HIS SOUL.

Among the ravages of Time, one regrets to reckon so many interesting and valuable works of classical literature. A perfect copy of Sappho's poems would be an inexpressible delight to any scholar or any lover of letters. Who would not recover the lost books of Livy from oblivion, if he could? And the lost Annals of Ennius, the missing Fasti of Ovid, and the extinct plays of Aristarchus, would they not be precious if we could recover them too? Hadrian's Address to his Soul, a light waif, has floated safely over the gulfs that have washed down so many writings of antiquity, wafted to our time from the second century;—a small composition which covers no more than a scrap of paper;—four little lines, but an exquisite bit of sentiment.

Animula, vagula, blandula,
Hospes, comesque corporis,
Quæ nunc abibis in loca,
Pallidula, frigida, nudula,
Nec, ut soles, dabis jocos?

THOU gentle wanderer, guest of the body and companion,
Say, to what country art thou going, cold and defenceless?
Sad art thou now? and the jests which you uttered so late, are they silent?

IN SHADOW.

Tears . . . . . .
. . . . . .
Rise in the heart, and gather in the eyes,
In looking on the . . . . . autumn fields.
And thinking of the days that are no more.

TENNYSON: *The Princess.*

NOW, when the warm September day has ended,
As Eve, on hill and valley drops her mantle,
And half the landscape is dissolved in shadow, —

Here, on this once familiar spot, I linger,
Where softly slopes the sward, and gently murmurs
The shallow stream below me in the alders.

The thin, pale moonbeams quiver on its bosom,
Through the near copse, whose leaves untouched by Autumn,
O'er the small stream scarce stir upon the branches.

And in the west, above the dark horizon,
I see the crescent moon between the poplars,
And just o'er yonder hill, the planet Venus.

Hard by yon cloud that floats above the forest,
And touches at its lowest edge the pine-tops,
Hangs Mars, a ruby on the brow of evening.

And in the distance, o'er the darkened valley,
Across the surface of the level meadows,
I see the small lights of the hamlet glimmer,—

While near me, and beyond me, in the grass-land,
And constant in each clump of gloomy alders,
The evening crickets hum their drowsy chorus.

The influence of the scene steals o'er my spirit,
As on my senses float the sky and landscape,
And oft I yield myself to thoughtful revery.

From out the Past, comes back a mild, clear evening.
With many golden sunsets shining through it,
One mild, calm evening in the early Autumn, —

When on the smooth, green field beyond the lowland,
You, friend of other days, on yonder hillside,
Last sat in talk with me below the maples.

Pleasant the lights shone from the distant village,
While dark below us looked the silent meadows,
And dimly swam the far-off vale and upland.

And then, as now, above the round horizon,
Shone the new moon beyond the western pine-tops,
And just o'er yonder hill, the planet Venus.

Gazing upon the scene, I well remember,
While the new moon faintly revealed your features,
And slept the woodland on the hill behind us, —

In our long talk, we touched our old, vexed question,
Man's life, linked strangely to the Past and Future,
And that dim world that lies beyond the mortal.

Turning your face with a half-sad expression,
Towards the faint light that in the dark sky glimmered,
While half the distant slope was hid in shadow, —

You said, — "Of this, my faith holds firm, that sometime,
Somewhere, we shall attain to clearer insight ·
That in the Present, what we see but darkly, —

And here we vainly seek to solve by Reason,
Shall lie, at length, in our more subtle vision,
Clear as these fields, in Noon's broad glare, to-morrow."

And as I look above the calm horizon,
I think, at last, in some pure realm of ether,
To you, all doubt is changed to perfect knowledge.

BY THE BROOK.

IN yonder glen, a shallow streamlet
Slips in its small bed o'er the pebbles,
Among the maples and the birches,
While on its banks the sombre alders
Half hide from sight the narrow channel.
On pleasant days, the golden sunshine
Steals inward through the thick-leaved branches,
Aud softly sleeps upon its bosom.

It makes a pleasant, constant murmur,
Through all the hours of Spring and Summer,
Through all the mellow days of Autumn,
Filling the glen with its low music.
And yearly bloom along its margin,
The snowdrop and the early primrose.
The orchis and the yellow violet.
On either side slopes the smooth pasture,
Where a few scattered trees each season
Cast a cool shade upon the greensward.
As runs the dell to meet the valley,
The brooklet drops to yonder meadow,
And further on, a dozen houses
Rest quietly behind the lindens,
While o'er the little rustic hamlet,
Rises a single, ancient church-spire.
Upon the margin of the streamlet,
One summer day, in early August,
Sat, on the mossy bank, a maiden,
Within the shadow of a willow,
As stole the sunlight through the maples,
The thick-leaved branches of the birches,
Lighting up here and there the water,
That half in shade and half in sunshine,
As it ran on in light and shadow,

Slipped smoothly downward o'er the pebbles.
And on the air, in soft, low accents,
Was borne, at times, this plaintive burden :

"How many months are gone!
O weary months to me,
Since by the cottage gate
We parted
Under the summer stars,
While o'er the western hill
Hung the low, crescent moon
Above us,
As with a fresh June rose
He decked my hair, and said,
'When the next Spring
Should flush the fields,
And wake the early flowers,
When next the lilacs bloomed,
And snowballs in the yard
Again were white,
He would return,
And hand in hand we 'd go
With Love, from May to May.'
But ah! from May to May,
Men's hearts are false,
Are false, from May to May!"

And the stream ran on in its way to the valley,
O'er the smooth, brown stones to the quiet meadow,
In its channel ran on, with a pleasant murmur,
While the robin sat near and sang in the beech-tree.

"Twice have the lilacs blossomed since,
And twice the snowballs in the yard;

But never since that hour
We parted
Beside the garden gate,
Under the crescent moon,
While on us looked
The summer stars,
Has he returned
To Love or me.
Now Grief goes hand in hand,
Alas!
From May to May with me,
With me from May to May!"

And the stream ran on in its way to the valley,
O'er the smooth, brown stones to the quiet meadow,
In its channel ran on, with a pleasant murmur,
While the bobolink sang hard by in the maple.

"The bright days come and go,
And Nature's face is fair;
To me all days are sad,
And smile the fields no more,
Since Hope and Love have flown,
Ah, me!
Since Hope and Love have flown!"

And the stream ran on in its way to the valley,
O'er the smooth, brown stones to the quiet meadow,
In its channel ran on, with a pleasant murmur,
While the field-sparrow sat and sang in the alders.

IN THE CRADLE OF THE HILL.

BY this small pond upon the hill,
As in the west the August sun shines down the pleasant slope,
And the soft air the branches stir above the shallow pool,
I sit, where Fancy woos me oft.

Hard by me, in the orchard trees,
Whose tops against the hillside lean, the dark-red apples gleam;
The restful sky, above the near horizon where I sit,
Sleeps in the calm wave at my feet.

Thick are yon oak-trees' leaves and green,
That for a hundred years has thrown its shadow o'er the glebe:
To-day, it casts a pleasant shade where the still cattle lie,
Along the smooth, rich pasture sward.

Beyond me, are the willows, where
The clump of yon witch-hazel waves to the warm summer wind:
O'er the moist margin of the pond the blue flag lightly swings,
The bulrush and the celandine.

The birds have sought the deep-wood shade,
And hushed their notes on all the slope above the quiet vale:
But in the ash that rears its top among the willows near,
I hear the sharp, shrill locust sing.

Anon the soft air fans my cheek:
The thistle-blossom gently nods by yonder mossy rock:
And near, beyond the tufted knoll, the ancient pine-tree makes
A drowsy murmur in my ear.

Above me, in the pasture-land,
Beside yon small, low clump of alders, sways the golden-rod:
And by the water's edge, the south wind stirs the poplar boughs,
Where nods the orchis in the shade.

There waves the white spiræa beyond,
Beside the purple vervain and the blooming clematis:
While in the clear pool sleeps the water-lily in the sun,
As snow-white through the flags it gleams.

How noiseless seems the distant world!
Afar below me, sleeps the hamlet in the quiet vale:
Scarce is a sound in all the circle of the summer hills;
And dreamy is the silent air.

Serene is all the summer sky.
I lie along the greensward of the pleasant pasture-slope,
And o'er the branches of the willows, near me bending low,
Look far within its peaceful depths.

Here, in this spot, the pulse of Life
Beats undisturbed: and here a blessed influence soothes
my soul:
I feel thy arms, O Nature, fold me gently to thy breast:
Thy warm heart throb against my own.

Here breathes thy spirit into mine,
The accents of a low, still voice, like a celestial psalm:
With thee I hold communion, and in sympathy am
one
With every form and mood of thine.

O pale flower, sleeping in yon lake,
In all the memory of this day, you shall forever bloom:
In yon small pond, shall sleep forevermore the restful
sky,
And o'er it wave, ye willow boughs!

You have become a part of me,
Ye verdant summer fields, from this blest hour until I die;
Through every year, the breath of this sweet day shall
fan my cheek,
And you, for aye, O sweet scene, smile!

A FEW WORDS ABOUT SOME ENGLISH RURAL POETS.

I SUPPOSE not many persons read Pope's pastorals now-a-days, but they were read and admired a century and three-quarters ago. One breathes the fresh air of the country in Shakspeare's rural descriptions, which are among the most exquisite in our literature. We walk hand in hand with Herrick through his "Hesperides," and at every step, catch the sight of rural delights which have a perennial freshness. One gladly joins with him in the simple pleasures of the "Harvest Home," and is always ready to go a-maying with his "Corinna." We travel back, in imagination, to the pastures and meadows, the woods and streams, which we left behind us long ago, and as we do, we wipe some natural moisture from the eye, it may be. With good Izaak Walton does one ever tire of angling? As he leads us among the simple scenes of Nature, we find him very pleasant company, and often recall what Wordsworth says of his prose-pastoral; — "Fairer than life itself is this sweet book." The picturesque charms of rural England are perpetually reproduced in "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso." Collins' "Ode to Evening," is like the close of a serene summer day in the country; and "Gray's Elegy in a Country Churchyard," like the calm of a rural Sabbath to the mind. Goldsmith revives the simple pictures, the pure associations, of childhood, and his village

pastor and village schoolmaster are friends with whom we never part company. Burke said of his pastoral scenes, "They beat all; Pope and Phillips, and Spencer too, in my opinion." But we may say of them, what certainly could not be said of Pope's, that they might at least be true. Pope used to bestow on Phillips the epithet of "namby-pamby Phillips," and ridiculed him in the "Guardian." But if his pastorals are inferior to Goldsmith's, they are greatly superior to Pope's. Goldsmith's rural scenes themselves, are only cabinet pictures of Nature. Spencer's, a broad and lovely English landscape. Cowper, who has many defects, always writes like a true poet, when Nature is his theme. He was in sympathy with all its spirit and forms, and never failed to be its faithful interpreter. The "Task" is still one of the best poems in our language, and is forever associated in the reader's mind with the "Seasons." If, in the multiplicity of modern works of poetry, the "Seasons" are read less than they were three-quarters of a century since, they must still be reckoned masterpieces of natural description. Reading them is like looking at a succession of fine scenes in the country. We see not only the broad outlines, but all the features of the landscape. Thomson paints Nature with a kind of epic completeness, so to speak, as Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter, gradually change into each other, and round the circle of the "varied year." And his "Hymn to the Seasons" swells the soul like the deep music of a lofty "*Te Deum*." How many persons read Crabbe at the present day? It has been said, and the assertion has a good deal of truth, that "he handles life so as to take the bloom off it." Yet his descriptions of character and scenery have a vivid truthfulness. But he has no sense of beauty. He lacks that high artistic quality which is so abundantly vouchsafed to the true poet, namely, the power to idealize the subjects which he treats. And his poetry, judged by anything like a high standard, is no poetry at all. Often his pictures are not attractive, but rather repulsive to the imagination. Wordsworth was a sincere lover of Nature, and its consecrated high priest. Perhaps he looked upon it with too serious an eye, and was inclined to dwell too much upon the great mysteries which touch Life at every side. But the "Lines written on Tintern Ab-

bey" charm the mind with their chastened sentiment and description, like a still landscape, or like distant music, on a calm summer evening. We feel

> "A presence that disturbs us with the joy
> Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
> Of something far more deeply interfused,
> Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
> And the round ocean and the living air,
> And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:
> . . . . . .
> Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart;
> And passing even into the purer mind,
> With tranquil restoration: . . . .
> . . . . . .
> . . . . . that blessed mood,
> In which the burden of the mystery,
> In which the heavy and the weary weight
> Of all this unintelligble world
> Is lightened."

"Nine-tenths of my verses," he tells us, "have been matured in the open air." And we may well believe it. Nature is everywhere mirrored in them, like the fields and sky in the clear depths of his own quiet lakes. Coleridge has written some of the best descriptive poetry which we have, and if his rural world is not a large one, he always gives us the choicest bits of landscape. And "Scott's poetry, like his prose," it has been said, "carries with it the scent of the heather." Herrick shall give us a flower for May-Day, which will keep fresh and beautiful through all the months of every year:

> There 's not a budding boy or girl this day
> But 's gone up and gone to bring in May:
> A deal of youth, ere this, is come
> Back, and with white-thorn laden home.
> Some have despatched their cakes and cream,
> Before that we had left to dream:
> And some have wept, and wooed, and plighted troth,
> And chose their priest ere we can throw off sloth.
> Many a green gown has been given:
> Many a kiss, both odd and even,
> Many a glance, too, has been sent
> From out the eye, Love's firmament.

ON THE PORTRAIT OF SHAKESPEARE.

OFT as I gaze upon this face,
Or on these mild eyes, instinct with the soul of Poesy,
Imagination, Fancy, an Intelligence that seems
To read the inmost human heart :

Oft as I look upon this brow,
Or muse upon this forehead which is placid as a child's,
Or trace the well-known lineaments which this serene
face wears,
All the expression written here ,—

I think of Petrarch's laurel crown
And his whose image here I trace,—where every nation binds
A chaplet,—and the bays about his temples greener grow
As seasons wane, and years return.

I think how on his wondrous page,
Our many-sided life revived beneath his master hand:
Lived in its manners, humors, passions, all its vital warmth,
And took once more its living hue.

I think how great an interest I
May claim in that inheritance to which all men are heirs:
Hamlet and Falstaff, Richard and old Lear, — a hundred forms
Which walk the earth, with deathless life.

I think how in yon Northern Isle,
His genius has made one spot now a Mecca to all minds:
Has one small island made forevermore a Palestine;
And all men pilgrims at one shrine.

O Poet, resting by the stream
Which threads yon vale, — your ashes undisturbed in Stratford sleep:
Yet now, far off, the spirit that lived in them, oft I think
With high, celestial pulses beat.

Looking across the river Styx,
O'er which that ancient boatman, Charon, rowed thee long ago,
I see thee in the realms Elysian, — in companionship
With an immortal company.

I see thee, Bard of Avon, there
In company with the immortal bards of every clime:
Homer and Pindar, Sophocles and old Anacreon;
With Sappho and with Æschylus:

With Tasso and the Tuscan bard,—
Horace and gentle Virgil,—Chaucer and mild Addison,—
With Spencer, Milton, Dryden, — and with Burns, where Beaumont sits
Hard by, near 'rare Ben Jonson's' shade!

SERE LEAVES.

Tamar. . . . . . I almost think
Some spiritual creature waits on thee.
Hadad. I heard no sounds, but such as evening sends
Up from the city to these quiet shades:
. . . . . .
. . . . . .
Tamar. The sounds I mean,
Floating like mournful music round my head,
From unseen fingers.
Hadad. When?
Tamar. Now, as thou camest. . . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . .
But they were dirge-like. HILLHOUSE.

THE oak-tree stands beside the wall,
And looks upon the wide highway;
About its trunk, from year to year,
As Summer goes, and Spring returns,
Clings the wild grapevine.
To-day, among its leaves, I see its small, dark berries gleam.

The oak has stood a hundred years
Beside the wide, the ancient way;
In storm and sunshine reared its head,
And laughed at Time as he went by:
Stood strong and stately.
Now shine its sere leaves in the sun, and bare are half its boughs.

In the rank soil it striketh deep,
Strikes wide and deep its hundred roots:
Its trunk is rough, and stout, and tall,
And it flings out its branches wide.
And every season
It casts a broad and pleasant shade upon the rich, green sward.

I sit beside its giant bole,
And listen to the autumn wind;
It makes to-day a mournful sound
Above my head, in the old oak-tree.
Ever its murmur
In the long boughs, falls like a low, sad whisper, on my ear.

Anon I count the buried years,
Since Youth and I were playmates here,
When Hope, with whom we maying went,
And Fancy, with the hues of Morn,
Crowned Life with flowers
More fair than bright-eyed Summer brings, or start at
Spring's soft breath.

How many faded dreams, I think,
That flushed the year from May to May,
Along the sere fields of the Past,
Strow the bare ground where'er I tread!
To-day, they rustle
Often in Memory, with a dry sound, beneath my feet.

Comes the dropped foliage to the tree
No more, nor by-gone Mays return:
The landscape blooms no second time,
In all the dry fields of the Past.
No second spring-time
Have our flown dreams, and hopes, once sere, are like
the last year's leaves.

The summer months, erelong will go :
With Spring will come the balmy days :
And on this turf, through August suns,
Your cooling shade, hale tree, will sleep :—
Freshen the greensward.
Each year, the robin and the blue-bird sing in your green boughs !

NEPENTHE.

AT length, has come the warm May weather.
The sward is green upon the upland,
While fresh, beyond me, is the meadow,
And a soft mist is in the maples.
Green, yonder, is the honeysuckle,
Where bloom, each Spring, the early violets,
And fresh, to-day, are all the cowslips
In the warm glen below the orchard.
New life to earth, brings the sweet spring-time,
But does not to thy pale cheek, Agnes.
Only the amaranth and rosemary,
These bright days bring thee — and nepenthe.

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